TL 1389

TAPOL REPORT

To all East Timor Solidarity Groups

UN Decolonisation Committee

1. This is to remind you to make sure that several people from your country go to New York to petition the UN Decolonisation Committee on East Timor. East Timor will be discussed by the Committee on 14 or 15 August.

2. As in previous years, you should try to send your own representative and urge others such as a church personality, a well-known MP, academic, former cabinet minister or Nobel laureate, to petition. The petitioner will have ten minutes to speak and should prepare 30 copies of her/his submission for distribution, along with a synopsis, which could be useful for the UN's summary report. Make sure that the petition speaks exclusively about East Timor, making no reference to other decolonisation cases which might cause unnecessary controversy.

3. Please write as quickly as possible to: The Chairman, Special Committee of 24, United Nations, 33rd Floor, UN Secretariat Building, New York, NY 10017, formally requesting permission to petition and giving the name of the petitioner. Other petitioners should do the same on their own behalf. You may also fax your request to (212) 963 4879. Requests for permission to petition must reach the Committee not later than mid July; if many requests are received early, it may convince the Committee to provide more time for East Timor.

New wave of arrests in East Timor

4. There are reports of many arrests in Dili and Baucau as well as in Bali and Jakarta. About 40 people were arrested in Baucau in May and were being held at a new detention centre near the airport; no names are available. Dozens of people were also arrested in Dili during May; the names and details of more than a dozen are available. An East Timorese student, Elias Pereira Moniz, was arrested in Bali on 14 June, causing other students in Bali to flee to Jakarta to seek refuge in foreign embassies in order to be able to leave for Portugal.

5. The precise reason for all these arrests is not clear. It may be part of the overall preparations for the Pope's visit in October and/or related to continuing military operations under way at present, in an attempt to crush the resistance in time for the visit. It seems that the detainees include people suspected of involvement in clandestine activities and of maintaining links with the outside world. The clandestine network outside East Timor, in Bali and Jakarta, is also a target; hence the crackdown on East Timorese students in Bali where many East Timorese students are now studying. Another possible explanation is that the army wants to isolate Bishop Belo and cut his lines of communication with the outside world, following his letter to the UN calling for a plebiscite.

6. On 30 May, a demonstration was organised in Dili by Apodeti people to

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protest against Belo's UN initiative, but it was swamped by people who turned out in their thousands to express support for the Bishop. He used the occasion to reiterate his reasons for writing to the UN.

7. On 15 June, Lucas da Costa, one of those who had fled to Jakarta, was arrested in Jakarta. His whereabouts is not known. As a result, six others decided to seek refuge in several embassies. A seventh student, Miguel Amaral Gutteres, is unaccounted for and may have disappeared. The six students from Bali first approached the Swedish embassy on 16 June but left when embassy officials threatened to call in the army. (This is now being taken up with the Swedish government.)

8. On Monday 19 June, four of the six students went to the Vatican embassy and two to the Japanese embassy to seek refuge. They also tried to enter the Australian embassy but found it too heavily guarded. Neither of the embassies showed any sympathy for the plight of the students who were clearly extremely afraid about their personal safety. Instead, embassy officials consulted the Indonesian authorities in order to convince the students to leave. With the help of Lopez da Cruz, former deputy governor of East Timor, the four at the Vatican were persuaded to leave on 20 June; they are now staying at his home, allegedly 'under his protection'. Another Timorese politician, Salvador Ximenes Soares, a DPR member, was sent to the Japanese embassy to persuade the two there to leave and they are now staying at his home.

9. It is very likely that more arrests will follow. Please do everything possible to get publicity for these developments.

Preparations for the UN Human Rights Sub-commission

10. The worsening human rights situation means that it is absolutely imperative for the UN Sub-commission to adopt a resolution on East Timor at its forthcoming meeting (7-31 August), so that East Timor is included on the agenda of the UN Human Rights Commission next March. In consultation with CDPM, we are planning to write a short document on recent developments, to be sent to all expert members of the Sub-commission a few weeks before the Sub-commission meeting commences, with a covering letter signed by as many solidarity groups as possible. I shall shortly be submitting the covering letter to you for your approval and hope that you will agree to leave the drafting of the document itself to CDPM and TAPOL.

Carmel
28 June 1989